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## **House panel advances legislation to allow Treasurer to hire own attorneys**

The House Government Committee voted along party lines to advance legislation that would add the State Treasurer's Office to an existing list of government agencies able to contract their own attorneys separate from the Attorney General's Office.

The bill, H2103, proposed by the committee's chairman, Rep. Sam Crump of Anthem, was supported by the committee's Republican members. Democrat Reps. Chad Campbell, Anna Tovar and Tom Chabin opposed the measure.

The legislation was urged by State Treasurer Dean Martin, a Republican who has feuded with Attorney General Terry Goddard, a Democrat, over the legality of payments destined for Goddard's office from funds recovered from a 2002 fraud case that cost Arizona governments approximately \$131 million.

Martin contends he should be granted the flexibility to hire outside counsel to help advise the State Treasurer's Office on complex financial matters outside the expertise of the Attorney General's Office.

Martin's contention was lobbied against, although unsuccessfully, by Deputy Attorney General Greg Stanton, who said granting the treasurer the ability to seek independent counsel could create conflicting interpretations of state law.

**Christian Palmer**, Arizona Capitol Times